bark canoe suffers little or no damage where a dugout would either capsize or split. Canvas canoes would tear too easily. B 396

When a jatuba tree suitable in size and condition of the bark is found, a platform of slender poles is built around it. Three upright poles are set up forming a triangle around the tree. Cross pieces in which the worker stands are lashed across from pole to pole. The outline of the canoe is then marked on the tree and is peeled off carefully by driving in flexible wedges in between the bark and the wood. B [40]

The bark thus gotten is bent into the proper shape by building a smoldering fire on its inner surface and by means of poles used as levers on the sides, forming eventually a framework in which the canoe is wedged. The bending in of the sides too much is prevented by cross pieces. Sometimes the maker etches out a design on the outer bark.

The canoe thus obtained is a shallow affair and practically flat bottomed, which gives it stability. The bow is open and clay is used along the edges as a bank to keep out the water. The stern is raised somewhat but often water enters by it likewise.

The Bakairi, while making the canoes, fasted until the end of the day's work, when they ate pure food, in this case rice, farina and meat. It was explained that really they should have eaten nothing but piranha and biiju, foods that we did not possess. Sexual abstinence is necessary, and were some women in the catamenial period to pass nearby, the bark would split. After work is begun no one, in fact, must approach, and if he, unaware that a canoe is being made, does come near, he must not leave on any account. B 396 784

Though we found other signs of the presence of aborigines in the neighborhood we never saw them; but that we were being watched carefully, there was no doubt. 000

With overloaded canoes we finally embarked on the next lap of our journey to the mouth of the Kulusen river. For another seven days we worked in the rapids, fatiguing and morale-destroying work. Often we had to cut our way through fallen trees; for long distances canoes were dragged over dangerous stretches; many times the canoes had to be unloaded and the luggage portaged. The men worked naked in the water, and it remains a marvel how we came past the rapids without having suffered some serious injury and without having lost either canoes or baggage. However, the work in the water told on the men